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TO AMEMBASSY BISHKEK IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ALMATY PRIORITY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE IMMEDIATE 5/27/97

AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

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FROM EAP/CM

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: CASC

SUBJECT: WHEREABOUTS REQUEST -- POLITICAL ACTIVIST HARRY WU

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY. HARRY WU, AKA PETER H. WU, A WELL-KNOWN
INMATE OF CHINA'S PRISONS FOR MANY YEARS AND NOW AN
AMERICAN CITIZEN, WAS REPORTEDLY PLANNING A QUIET ENTRY

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INTO CHINA VIA COMMERCIAL FLIGHT FROM BISHKEK TO KASHI
(KASHGAR), XINJIANG. HIS WIFE AND A CLOSE FRIEND AND
POLITICAL ASSOCIATE HAVE LOST TOUCH WITH HIM, ARE
CONCERNED, AND ASK THAT WE SEEK TO ASCERTAIN HIS
WHEREABOUTS AND, IF STILL IN BISHKEK, HIS PLANS. GIVEN
WU'S PROMINENCE THROUGH A SEGMENT A FEW YEARS AGO ON CBS'

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"60 MINUTES," HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE LAOGAI ("LABOR REFORM") FOUNDATION, AND HIS FREQUENT TESTIMONY BEFORE CONGRESS HARSHLY CRITICAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS IN CHINESE PRISONS AND MORE GENERALLY, HE WOULD BE CONSIDERED PERSONA NON GRATA TO THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT AND DENIED AN ENTRY VISA IF USING HIS TRUE NAME (WU HONGDA OR HARRY WU) AND IDENTIFIED BY THE CHINESE VISA OFFICER. ON BECOMING A U.S. CITIZEN HE CHANGED HIS NAME LEGALLY TO PETER H. WU, AND HIS U.S. PASSPORT IS SAID TO BEAR THAT NAME. GIVEN CONCERNs ABOUT HIS SITUATION, WE WOULD BE VERY GRATEFUL FOR ANY INFORMATION WHICH EMBASSY BISHKEK CAN DEVELOP AND REPORT IMMEDIATELY BACK TO US.
END SUMMARY.

3. AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE JEFF FIEDLER, A FRIEND AND POLITICAL ASSOCIATE OF HARRY WU AND WU'S WIFE JING LI, CONTACTED THE DEPARTMENT (EAP/CM) URGENTLY ON THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 22 TO ASK OUR ASSISTANCE IN ESTABLISHING WU'S PRESENT WHEREABOUTs AND INTENTIONS. FIEDLER, WHOM WE HAVE FOUND TO BE CONSCIENTIOUS, ACCURATE AND RELIABLE, TOLD US -- AS HE DID AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME LAST YEAR, IN CONNECTION WITH A SIMILAR TRIP -- THAT HE HAD TRIED WITHOUT SUCCESS TO DISSUADE WU FROM ANOTHER SEMI-COVERT ENTRY INTO CHINA. WU HAD LEFT THE UNITED STATES WITH MS. SUE HOWELL, A POLITICAL ASSOCIATE, WHOM FIEDLER DESCRIBED AS

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A FORMER IBM EXECUTIVE AND DUKE LAW SCHOOL STUDENT. FIEDLER AND WU'S WIFE HAD MADE TELEPHONE CONTACT WITH WU IN ALMATY LAST WEEK, BUT HAD FAILED TO MAKE CONTACT WITH HIM IN BISHKEK ON JUNE 17 ALTHOUGH THEY HAD RECEIVED FROM HIM A BRIEF FAXED MESSAGE DATE/TIME-STAMPED BISHKEK 6/17 2:49 PM INDICATING THAT HE HAD ARRIVED BY BUS AND ASKING THAT THEY CALL. SUBSEQUENT EFFORTS TO MAKE CONTACT ALSO FAILED. THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT SOME HARM MAY HAVE BEFALLEN WU AND HOWELL.

4. FIEDLER INDICATED THAT HARRY WU'S CONTACT IN BISHKEK WAS

THESE LINES HAVE BEEN CONSISTENTLY BUSY SINCE JUNE 17TH WHEN AN INITIAL CALL PRODUCED AN UNKNOWN MALE VOICE, WHICH HAS ADDED TO MRS. WU'S AND FIEDLER'S CONCERN.

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5. FIEDLER EXPLAINED THAT HARRY WU, WHO HAS MADE SEVERAL RETURN VISITS TO CHINA UNDER SEMI-COVERT CONDITIONS, HAD ALWAYS ADHERED TO CERTAIN GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATION PREVIOUSLY: MAXIMUM OF SEVEN DAYS OUT OF TOUCH, ALWAYS PROVIDED INFORMATION ON MEANS AND TIME OF ENTRY TO A NEW PLACE, AND ALWAYS CALLED PERSONALLY AFTER ARRIVAL AT A NEW PLACE. THUS FAR WU HAS BEEN OUT OF TOUCH FOR ONLY FIVE DAYS, COUNTING THE CRYPTIC FAX MESSAGE, BUT HAS PASSED THE SEVEN DAY MARK FOR PHONE CONTACT.

6. ACCORDING TO FIEDLER:

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[REDACTED]

7. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE ALL APPROPRIATE EMBASSY BISHKEK EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH WHEREABOUTS AND INTENTIONS OF WU AND HOWELL. PLEASE SLUG REPLY FOR EAP/CM. OWING TO LATENESS OF HOUR WHEN INFORMATION RECEIVED, SENSITIVITY OF THE INQUIRY, AND POSSIBLE URGENCY OF THE SITUATION, WE HAVE NOT CLEARED THIS MESSAGE WITH CA AND L/EAP BUT ASK THAT REPLY ALSO BE SLUGGED THERE.
CHRISTOPHER

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